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Letter dated 19 May 2003 from the Permanent Representatives of Germany and the Netherlands to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

We have the pleasure to present to you herewith the report on the work of the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan, covering the period from 10 February to 10 May 2003 (see annex).

We should be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Gunter **Pleuger**
Ambassador

(*Signed*) Dirk Jan **van den Berg**
Ambassador

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Annex to the letter dated 19 May 2003 from the Permanent Representatives of Germany and the Netherlands to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Quarterly report on progress towards the implementation of the mandate of the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan

Summary

The Netherlands and Germany took over the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) mission as lead nations on 10 February. ISAF III is conducting its mission in conformity with the relevant provisions of the UN mandate and the Bonn Agreement.

The primary effort of the mission is to assist the Afghanistan Transitional Authority (ATA) in maintaining a secure environment in the ISAF Area of Responsibility (AOR). The security situation in the AOR is still calm, but there are concerns regarding the situation outside the AOR, especially in the southern and south-eastern parts of Afghanistan. This could have a negative impact on security in the Kabul area. To counter this threat, ISAF's security concept is based on high visibility and co-operation with Afghan security institutions. This concept has proven to be effective. .

The ISAF mission also relates to the development of Afghan security structures. Although the ATA is in charge, the international community (IC) has assumed specific responsibilities with regard to Security Sector Reform (SSR). Key issues in this context are the Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) of factional armies, build-up of the Afghan National Army (ANA) and re-establishment of a functioning National Police. The start of DDR is generally considered to be crucial to the success of the reform process. ISAF III contributes to the training of the ANA and the National Police on a limited scale and stands ready to assist with the DDR process in Kabul if so requested by the ATA.

ISAF not only co-operates closely with the national security authorities, but also with Afghan authorities in other sectors. Its extensive Civil Military Co-operation (CIMIC) organisation is well equipped to liaise with Afghan authorities at all levels. To achieve safe and secure Air Lines of Communications for its mission ISAF assists the ATA in the development of Kabul International Airport (KIA). In close consultation with UNAMA ISAF also closely monitors the constitution and election processes as the ATA prepares for the Constitutional Loya Jirga (CLJ) in October 2003 and the General Elections in 2004. If requested ISAF will provide logistical and security support. Since the very beginning ISAF III has developed a good working relationship with US HQ at Bagram (CJTF 180) resulting in close co-ordination of common areas of interest.

The decision of the North Atlantic Council on April 16, 2003, to continue and enhance NATO's support to ISAF, beginning in August 2003, will provide for continuity in the planning and command structure of ISAF.

I. INTRODUCTION

This report is submitted pursuant to UN Security Council Resolutions 1386 (2001) and 1444 (2002). It covers the period since ISAF III (GE/NL lead) took over on 10 February 2003.

II. FRAMEWORK ISAF III

a. Mandate and mission

The Bonn Agreement of 5 December 2001 states that the responsibility for providing security and law and order throughout the country resides with the Afghans themselves. The international community is requested to support the new Afghan authorities in the establishment and training of new Afghan security and armed forces.

Conscious of the fact that some time may be required for these new Afghan security and armed forces to be fully constituted and functioning, the United Nations Security Council was requested to consider authorising the early deployment of a United Nations mandated force to Afghanistan. This force would assist in the maintenance of security for Kabul and its surrounding areas. It would also be desirable if such a force was to assist in the rehabilitation of Afghanistan's infrastructure.

As a result of the above-mentioned request, the United Nations Security Council authorised in its Resolution 1386, dated the 20th of December 2001, the establishment of an International Security Assistance Force to assist the Afghan Interim Authority in the maintenance of security in Kabul and its surrounding areas, so that the Afghan Interim Authority as well as personnel of the United Nations can operate in a secure environment. The Council also authorised the Member States participating in the International Security Assistance Force, to take all necessary measures to fulfil its mandate. In its Resolution 1444, dated the 27th of November 2002, the United Nations Security Council decided to extend the authorisation for a period of one year beyond the 20th of December 2002.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) concerning command arrangements and related matters in the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) Afghanistan and arrangements by which the Participants will implement and establish ISAF, was drafted. It defines responsibilities, general principles and procedures as appropriate. All participating nations in ISAF III accepted and acknowledged the provisions of the Military Technical Agreement (MTA) between the International Security Assistance Force and the Transitional Administration of Afghanistan attached to the MOU. This MTA depicts the necessary support and technical arrangements for ISAF to conduct its operations and outlines the responsibilities of the Interim Administration in relation to ISAF. In addition, within the MTA the exact AOR for ISAF is defined.

On the basis of these documents the Federal Republic of Germany and The Kingdom of The Netherlands, both acting as lead nations for the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan, formulated the mission for ISAF III, which reads as follows:

ISAF III is to assist the ATA in maintaining security within the ISAF area of responsibility (AOR) so that the ATA, as well as United Nations personnel, can operate in a secure environment in order to enable the ATA the build-up of security structures in Afghanistan in accordance with the Bonn Agreement and as agreed in the Military Technical Agreement.

b. Participating nations / contingents

ISAF currently consists of 29 troop contributing nations. In total the operational establishment of ISAF is about 5,400 personnel. Within this established structure the Kabul Multinational Brigade (KMNB) is the main operating force of ISAF, consisting of approximately 3,100 personnel divided over 25 nations and three battle groups. These forces allow ISAF to conduct its current military tasks within the Kabul AOR and to assist the Afghan authorities.

c. ISAF III structure

The ISAF III command and organisational structure consists of the HQ ISAF with its own Communication- and Information Systems (CIS) and Staff Support Battalions, a CIMIC Co-ordination Centre, Force Liaison elements, HUMINT teams, a Special Reconnaissance unit, the Kabul Multinational Brigade (KMNB) and a Task Force to operate the military part of Kabul International Airport (KIA). The Bundeswehr Operational Command with its bi-national German and Netherlands manned ISAF Operation Co-ordination Centre (IOCC) functions as the higher echelon for HQ ISAF. Troop contributing nations are consulted about all relevant issues during the monthly meetings of the Committee of Contributors to ISAF held in The Hague.

III. SECURITY

a. Overall security situation

ISAF's Area of Responsibility (AOR) remains relatively calm. There has been a drop in crime levels. In Kabul there is general support for the efforts of the central government and security forces as well as ISAF. It is assessed that the main threat to the security situation is coming from the East and South Eastern direction and from supporters of radical and terrorist groups already residing in Kabul.

Incidents with unexploded ordnance (UXOs) and improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and attacks with several 107mm rockets having been fired on the outskirts of Kabul in the general direction of the ISAF-led Camp Warehouse (Kabul Multinational Brigade) and the US-led Kabul Military Training Centre (KMTC) demonstrate the existence a persistent threat. Attacks gained a new quality when ISAF forces were deliberately targeted in a roadside bomb attack on an ISAF patrol on 7 March and an

orchestrated attack with two 122mm rockets on 30 March, one of which hit the HQ ISAF compound causing minor damage to infrastructure. Although the number of attacks has slightly declined recently, the apparent direct targeting of ISAF remains worrying.

b. Threat assessment

For the ISAF mission the districts in the East, Southeast and South of Kabul are at present the areas of greatest concern. These areas are used as main transit routes for anti-ATA operatives coming from Eastern and Southern Afghan provinces with a view to entering the Kabul City and conduct anti-ATA activities as well as staging grounds for attacks. The levels of criminal activity in these areas are considered high. Additionally, a large number of weapon caches containing weapons, ammunition and explosives remain there, thus facilitating activities of anti-ATA elements. This situation requires the highest level of vigilance of those responsible for security in Kabul.

c. ISAF Security Activities

The main focus of ISAF operations is the conduct of military patrols which, as far as the centre of Kabul is concerned, are primarily executed dismounted (on foot). On average 70 security patrols are executed in a 24-hour period while a sufficient reserve capacity for surge operations is retained. A quarter of these patrols are conducted jointly with Afghan police. In addition to the patrols reconnaissance assets are deployed throughout the AOR, considerably improving ISAF's situational awareness.

ISAF III forces continue to provide direct support and a variety of security assistance (advisory) services for public events, such as conducting explosive ordnance checks and operating Joint Command Posts with Afghan security authorities for international conferences, fairs and visits of foreign dignitaries.

The ISAF explosive ordnance disposal teams successfully assist in the collection of weapons and ammunition, including rockets and unexploded ordnance. In the reporting period ISAF explosive ordnance disposal teams collected and destroyed more than 68.000 rounds of unexploded ordnance.

d. Contingency Planning

Recognising the fact that the situation in theatre may change and ISAF may be facing new or additional challenges, ISAF HQ has developed appropriate contingency plans.

For instance, ISAF might be called upon by the ATA, through UNAMA, to assist – even outside of its AOR - in case of a humanitarian disaster. Upon authorisation the ISAF contingency plan "Humanitarian Disaster" allows for immediate disaster relief by ISAF forces using available assets including air transport if necessary, while at the same time continuing the primary ISAF mission in the ISAF AOR. Depending on possible national caveats and national decision-making, ISAF is able and prepared to assist

in immediate disaster relief with its air transport, engineer and medical capabilities to bridge the gap until other organisations are positioned to take over.

In the event of a negative development of the security situation, ISAF is poised to execute its contingency plan "Emergencies or a Deteriorating Security Environment". Basically, ISAF will seek to continue its usual mission profile for as long as possible, whilst exploring every possibility to halt and reverse the deterioration. In case of a critical deterioration ISAF will re-focus its operations to ensure that ATA, UNAMA and other essential agencies can continue to operate.

Prior to executing any Non-Combatant Extraction Operation (NEO) ISAF will seize every opportunity to stabilise the security environment in the ISAF AOR, while preserving ISAF freedom of manoeuvre.

The contingency plans have been developed in close co-ordination with all relevant parties in Kabul.

IV. COOPERATION WITH AFGHAN AUTHORITIES

a. Civil Military Co-operation (CIMIC)

ISAF's current CIMIC structure allows for extensive liaison and co-operation with Afghan authorities from ministry level down to the local level through maliks and mayors. It also maintains close relations with authorities in the sectors of education, police, health and agriculture. This multilevel and multidisciplinary liaison is also reflected in ISAF CIMIC co-operation, particularly with UNAMA as well as other IOs and NGOs. Besides achieving increased local trust in ISAF throughout the AOR, this network increases ISAF's insight in the development of Kabul's social situation, thus increasing the ability to prioritise support operations prudently.

The ISAF CIMIC staff has so far finalised overall assessments on the areas returnees, waste, sanitation, health, education and electric power supply. The CIMIC staff has planned an additional assessment of the labour market. Project priorities have so far been health, education and water, project sizes range from small quick impact projects to high visibility projects demanding budgets of up to 200 000 USD. Priorities, however, have to be set taking into account donor demands. Main donors are the European Union and several European countries. The funding situation has been scarce through the winter as promised funding has been delayed. The situation is now satisfactory.

CIMIC activities clearly strengthen local understanding of ISAF as a security assistance force. The co-operation between the CIMIC teams and the local organisations are excellent.

b. Contribution to development of the security structures

Primary responsibility for the security in Afghanistan lies with the ATA. ISAF assists where applicable and advises to help build the security structures. ISAF's attention is thus focussed on close co-operation and co-ordination with the proper Afghan authorities on the one hand, and the relevant actors from the IC on the other. ISAF III is a member of the Security Sector Reform Working Group (SSR WG) consisting of the concerned lead nations and UNAMA and is actively involved, in varying degrees, in the activities under consideration there. ISAF III also acts as the convening authority for the Joint Co-ordinating Body (JCB) consisting of COMISAF, senior Afghan security officials and the SRSG UN. The JCB reviews security issues and policies in Kabul.

Key players in the field of security in Afghanistan are the Ministries of the Interior and Defence as well as the National Department of Security (NDS). Under chairmanship of ISAF III high representatives of these institutions convene in a joint security assessment group to assess the threat situation in Afghanistan in general and in Kabul in particular on a regular basis. The results are then reported to the JCB. These assessments will serve as a basis for further development of a more consolidated security concept.

Key issue with regard to SSR is the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) of factional armies. The ATA is in the lead and has to decide where and when the DDR process will start. ISAF is prepared and willing to assist in the DDR process within its means and capabilities and within its AOR, if so requested by the ATA.

Closely linked to the DDR process is the status of the Afghan Military Forces (AMF) in view of the pledge of the participants in the UN Talks on Afghanistan to withdraw all military units from Kabul and other urban centres or other areas in which ISAF is deployed. ISAF III has now updated the Locations of Military Bases within Kabul (Annex C to Military Technical Agreement as of January 2002) and completed an inventory of all units and their strength. This provides a sound basis for the DDR process in the Kabul area.

The establishment of new security forces loyal to the central government is vital to the development of Afghanistan. For this reason ISAF supports the training of the National Police Force and of the new Afghan National Army on a limited scale in close co-operation with the respective lead nations US and Germany through their local representatives and the responsible Afghan ministries.

c. Specific Challenges

Kabul International Airport (KIA)

Achieving safe and secure Airlines of Communications (ALOC) for ISAF, while simultaneously promoting adherence to accepted international standards for Kabul International Airport (KIA) and the airspace of

Afghanistan are the most important prerequisites for the sustainability of ISAF as well as the political and economical recovery of Afghanistan.

The current situation at KIA is far from meeting accepted international standards for Air Operations (i.e. airspace control, infrastructure, unexploded ordnance (UXO) and mines, and security).

Ultimately, the responsibility lies with the Afghan government, namely with the Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism (MOCAT). ISAF's goal is to continue its active participation in working groups and committees, to contribute with advice and assistance to the respective Afghan authorities to the maximum extent possible, and within its means to foster security, safety and development at KIA.

Constitutional Process

The Afghan government has planned the Constitutional Loya Jirga (CLJ) for the period 1 - 25 October 2003. The preparations of the CLJ itself will require a timely review of options with regard to location, facilities and security arrangements. ISAF III stands ready to assist the ATA and UNAMA substantially in this regard. As the constitutional process so far is already facing delays, an appropriate timeframe for comprehensive logistical preparations has to be agreed upon fairly quickly. In view of the handover to ISAF IV in August and the need for continuity, these preparations should be well under way by that time. ISAF is in close contact with the Constitutional Support Unit of UNAMA to keep track of the process and to support the process where feasible.

General Elections

The Bonn agreement stipulates that general elections should take place not later than 24 months after the 'Emergency Loya Jirga' which was held in June 2001. ISAF is prepared to assist the ATA in preparing the General Elections and therefore will stay in close contact with the UNAMA Electoral Unit.

Operation Enduring Freedom

Although OEF and ISAF are separate operations, improved co-ordination and co-operation between the headquarters of the two operations has been achieved. A bi-monthly co-ordination working group was established and joint procedures were developed to co-ordinate several aspects of daily and emergency operations. Both commanders meet on a regular basis.

V. OVERALL JUDGEMENT

Since the last ISAF report to the UN Security Council ISAF has been able to ensure continuity in the execution of ISAF's core activities related to the enhancement of safety and security in its AOR. Concurrently, COM ISAF is engaged in a process of continuous consultations with the main political and

military authorities and key representatives of the international community in Kabul, in particular the SRSG UN, Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi. These consultations ensure an alignment of the full range of ISAF operations and resources with the relevant activities of other parties concerned and aim at facilitating an optimised ISAF support to the implementation of core elements of the Bonn peace process. Ultimately, COMISAF sees ISAF III as a catalyst to help keep the Bonn process on track.

In the reporting period the overall security in Kabul has remained by and large stable and virtually similar to that in the preceding period. There have been only slight indications of political agitation or increased terrorist activity related to the war in Iraq. It seems clear, however, that the increasing instability and rising number of incidents in the South and Southeast of Afghanistan could, in a number of ways, converge on the larger Kabul area and pose a threat to the stability in ISAF's AOR. If this countrywide trend goes unchallenged this could have a negative impact on the preparations for the national elections and the Constitutional Loya Jirga. This could constitute a serious setback for the Bonn process. At the same time processes of institutional rebuilding and reform (DDR, reform MoD in particular) have progressed conceptually but seem to have stalled operationally.

For the remaining period of the mandate ISAF III will, in this context, focus on providing the maximum support within means and capabilities. Given the duration of its tenure and the operational status of the main activities under the Bonn Agreement, ISAF III has to plan slightly beyond the horizon of 10 August in order to guarantee a smooth takeover by ISAF IV.

VI WAY AHEAD

ISAF III will continue to carry out its operational concept, the main thrust of which is to assist in ensuring a safe environment. At the same time ISAF will act as a catalyst for reconstituting and improving the situation in the security sector within its means and mandate. Security is key to the further development of the country. The role of ISAF and other coalition forces must be handed over to Afghan security forces as soon as possible. Much hard work, energy and substantial resources are necessary to create security forces under command and control of central government institutions. ISAF will continue to do its part to achieving this goal.